

OSCE gender action plan: MenEngage statement

Thank you Chair. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the OSCE MenEngage Group.

We recognise the importance of the OSCE Gender Action Plan and progress across OSCE's executive structures, processes, in the autonomous institutions, and in the field missions. And we welcome those areas identified where progress has been made, as well as concern where there has been backsliding.

We support tangible efforts to promote and advance gender equality, undertake concrete actions on UNSCR 1325 within the OSCE, and create an inclusive culture, which values diversity of thought within the OSCE.

We agree that it is in all of our interests to create an inclusive working environment and culture. And we support efforts to put in place appropriate, effective internal governance systems and processes to protect staff from bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment, and to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. It is a matter of duty of care for the OSCE and we are very supportive of the Secretary General and other OSCE executive management endeavours to this end.

Part of creating an inclusive working culture and environment is challenging ourselves and educating ourselves about the language we use and the implicit bias we have. Not jumping to conclusions or solutions, but listening. We will endeavour to do the best we can individually and collectively in this regard.

An inclusive culture is important in OSCE's peacebuilding and conflict prevention forums and mechanisms. We acknowledge that peace processes are more sustainable when women are included in formats and substances of discussions from the onset, and then throughout. The facts speak for themselves. We support efforts to fully utilise the OSCE's toolkit on Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes and offer to work with the Conflict Prevention Centre, the OSCE Gender Unit, and others as a Group to help in implementation.

We acknowledge and reiterate the importance of gender balance across all panels in OSCE meetings in every dimension, and agree to use our positions – including where we Chair key OSCE committees – to achieve gender balance.

We acknowledge that women throughout the OSCE region have been and are disproportionately negatively affected by the pandemic, in light of their role as frontline providers in healthcare and education, and in providing childcare support. And express our deep concern at the horrifying surge in domestic violence during lockdowns, with women being the majority of victims and men the majority of perpetrators.

Finally, we stand ready to assist in full and further implementation of the OSCE Gender Action Plan.

Thank you.